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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/419,891	10/18/1999	PAOLO BARACCHINI	1247-0831-3	2025

22850 7590 01/26/2004

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1940 DUKE STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

EXAMINER

OH, SIMON J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1615

DATE MAILED: 01/26/2004

18

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/419,891

Applicant(s)

BARACCHINI ET AL.

Examiner

Simon J. Oh

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 April 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 5-7 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 5-7 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). 18.
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____. 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Papers Received

Receipt is acknowledged of the applicant's amendment, response, request for extension of time, and notice of appeal, all received on 23 April 2003, and entered on 09 July 2003.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claims 5-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Debouzie *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 4,632,685)

The Debouzie *et al.* patent teaches a process for the production of felts, the fibers of which are situated randomly. The felt is produced through multiple steps of longitudinal compression, which first produces an undulation of fibers, followed by the creation of a random orientation (See Abstract; and Figures 1-3). It is disclosed that the felts are produced from fibers having a mean diameter of around 6 to 14 microns, and an average length of a few centimeters. In the disclosed process, the compression operation is preferably carried out on felts having a volumetric mass that does not exceed 60 kg/m³ (See Column 7, Lines 42-57).

It is the position of the examiner that the instantly claimed invention is obvious in view of the disclosure of the prior art. Limitations not explicitly disclosed in the prior art, such as fiber diameter, density, and speed ratios of conveyors, are not considered to grant a patentable distinction above the prior art, as they are features that may be easily adjusted by one of ordinary

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skill in the art with routine experimentation. Absent a demonstration of criticality by the applicant of such limitations, the instant claims remain obvious. The burden is shifted onto the applicant to show the inventive criticality of these limitations.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 23 April 2003 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Although the applicant has gone to great lengths to explain the difference in the products produced by the process of the prior art and that of the instantly claimed invention, the examiner must point out that the currently pending claims themselves do not indicate that a crimped intermediate is produced, nor is it clear from the language of the claims how such a feature contributes toward the production of a mat with a random fiber orientation with low density.

As stated above, the claim limitations of conveyor speed ratios are not considered by the examiner to grant a patentable distinctness above the prior art. If the applicant believes that such a claim limitation is essential to the instantly claimed invention, it begs the question of why such limitations are not already incorporated into the independent claim.

Correspondence

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Simon J. Oh whose telephone number is (703) 305-3265. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.

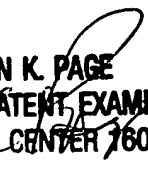
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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thurman K Page can be reached on (703) 308-2927. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 305-3014.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1234.

Simon J. Oh
Examiner
Art Unit 1615

sj0


THURMAN K. PAGE
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 7600